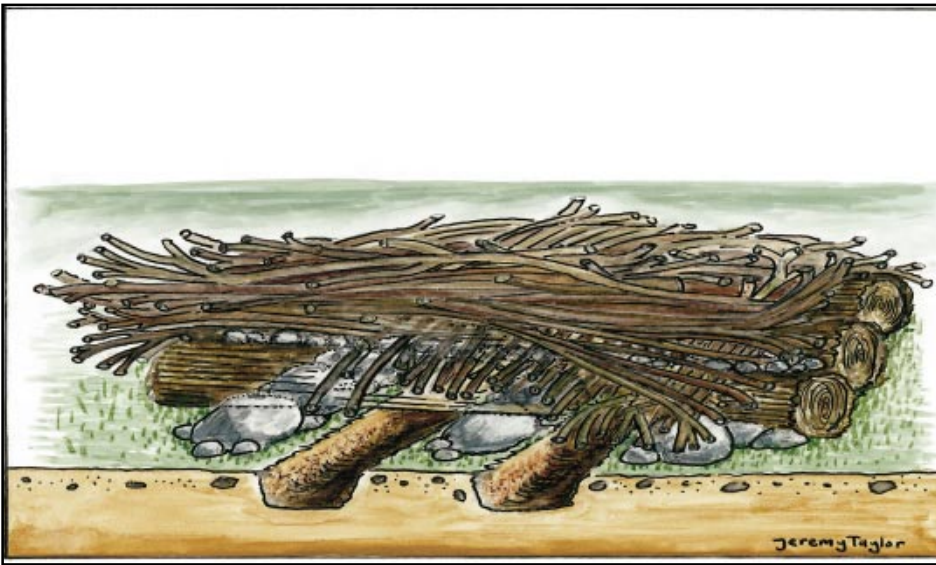


Projects and resources

The art of making brushpiles and rockpiles

The only way to increase wildlife numbers in an area is to increase the carrying capacity. This can be done by making the habitat better, or by building new habitat such as brushpiles and rockpiles. Properly constructed brushpiles and rockpiles can be an important tool to increase both game and nongame populations.



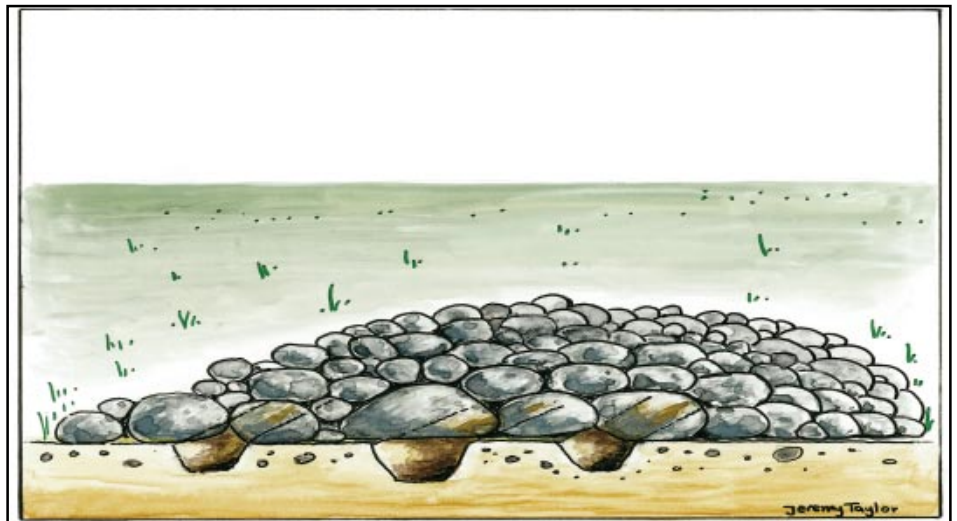
Brushpiles should be started with the biggest material on the bottom to provide hiding space under the pile. Shallow depressions can also be dug before beginning the brushpile to provide more space.

The largest limbs are laid about a foot apart in alternating layers crosswise. The largest material at the bottom keeps the brushier material off the ground for a longer amount of time before it begins to decay. A large amount of brush should be placed on top of the pile. Large brushpiles and rockpiles provide more security for the wildlife and will receive more use than small piles.

Brushpiles and rockpiles provide cover for many wildlife species. Brushpiles provide cottontail rabbits with a place to hide themselves and their young to avoid predators; coveys provide rabbits and other small mammals with homes. Reptiles such as lizards and gopher snakes like rockpiles because the rocks absorb heat during the day and stay warm at night.

Rockpiles should also start with the largest rocks on the bottom of the stack to create hiding places between the large rocks. Digging depressions under large flat rocks for beginning the rockpile will provide additional burrows.

A well-constructed brushpile can provide wildlife habitat for 20-30 years and a rockpile will last for decades. This is a good wildlife enhancement project for a family outing, or a sportsmen's/scout group project at your favorite hunting area.



For more information on building a brushpile or rockpile, call the Department of Fish and Game at (530)743-5068.